

ST. DONATO'S BIRTHDAY.

COMMISSIONER ROOSEVELT HELPS TO CELEBRATE IT.

Mr. Tates Five Chances Out of Thirteen. Including a Courtesy One for the Saint, it's Halfs for a Sheep—Philippines Moto, Wins and Hugs the Sheep with Joy.

Police Commissioner Theodore Roosevelt is a student of human nature. He likes to study the customs and habits of people, and particularly is he fond of strolling incognito through the crowded streets of the foreign colonies. On Monday Mr. Roosevelt assisted in the birthday celebration of a saint. He didn't mean to help the followers of the saint celebrate when he started out, but a few minutes with the worshippers was sufficient to fill him with enthusiasm, and in the rear yard of an Eliza- beth street tenement, surrounded by the sons and daughters of sunny Italy, the dignified President of the Board of Police Commissioners gazed upon the shrine of St. Donato and sent joy to the hearts of his Italian hosts by taking chances in raffles for sheep, watches, and other things.

St. Donato is apparently the exclusive property of the inhabitants of the village of Alletta, in Italy, and they have the sole right to celebrate his memory. They have a great feast in Alletta on the 17th of every August, and the Americans in this city have a little side celebration just as regularly. There are a good many of the natives of the village in the Italian colony in this city, and for some weeks they have been making elaborate preparation for the ceremony which took place on Monday. They displayed at conspicuous points handsome pictorial birthday cards bearing a picture of their patron, and conveying the information that San Donato da Ripacandida was born on Aug. 17, 1198. They hired the only band in Little Italy and put an extra feather in each player's hat.

The result was a pageant such as the colony hasn't seen since the people there began celebrating saints' birthdays. Around the block marched the band, followed by the friends of St. Donato, all in holiday attire, some with swords, some with guns, and others with nothing more formidable than bamboo canes. Under the window of Commissioner Roosevelt's room marched the procession, and into the room came the sounds of martial music. The Police Board's President jumped up and looked out. He saw the green feathers, the red sashes, the hats, the men who had thrown flowers before the parades, and he jammed on his hat and ran down stairs. "I've always wanted to see one of these ceremonies, and I'm glad you have agreed to go with a friend, and my friend agreed to go with him."

Four times the procession went around the block, and then it came to a halt in front of Frank Ficcinella's saloon in Elizabeth street. Mr. Roosevelt followed the people into the saloon and out into the rear yard, where he knelt down and said a short prayer. Then he gathered around the shrine of St. Donato. It had been placed against the wall of the tenement, and was covered with flowing ribbons and small crosses. The men who packed the yard were showing their admiration in various ways. Some were kneeling in prayer, others were placing crosses at the shrine, others were singing, while others were eating, drinking, and making merry.

A young Italian explained to Mr. Roosevelt that it was the celebration of the birthday of St. Donato.

"It is like your American St. Patrick's Day," he said.

The entrance of Mr. Roosevelt rather stirred the worshippers. They didn't know him, but, of course, he was not one of them, and were regarded curiously. They were not surprised, however, at the close scrutiny of the shrine, made in hand, and when the praying was over, welcomed him to the games and festivities. A big crowd had gathered.

The sheep was on exhibition. It was a thin, humpbacked beast, and not calculated to inspire a man with a great desire to eat it.

"I have some choices on that creature," said Mr. Roosevelt to his friend. "If I win I'll send it down to Chief Conlin's farm to be fattened for me. I think it may get a healthy chop out of him."

A fifty-cent piece bought Mr. Roosevelt five chances for the sheep, and as a tall Italian who had been in charge of the latter had dropped them in a box, Mr. Roosevelt was told that that same number belonged to him. He paid his money for the drawing to take place. A rival radio for a gold watch was going on at the other end of the yard, and it seemed to be more popular than the one for the sheep. The sheep was on exhibition.

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